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Clarke Press Release

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LEGISLATIVE LEADERS DEBATE DEATH PENALTY

Sen. Clarke and Rep. Julian Debate a Constitutional Amendment to End State's Ban

LANSING- Making good on a promise to lead the fight against the reinstatement of capital punishment in Michigan, State Senator Hansen Clarke (D-Detroit) today debated the death penalty issue with State Rep. Larry Julian (R-Lennon) live on WQBH's Back-to-Back hosted by Luther Keith. Rep. Larry Julian introduced the resolution calling for a state constitutional amendment that would end Michigan's 158-year-old ban on the death penalty.

"A poll released just yesterday shows that support for capital punishment declines once the public is given more information on the subject," said Sen. Clarke. "I welcome this opportunity to debate the state's leading capital punishment advocate and to share with the general public the many reasons why capital punishment is wrong for Michigan."

"The vast preponderance of evidence shows that the death penalty is not a more effective deterrent than imprisonment in reducing homicides," said Sen. Clarke. "In fact, studies show that states that do not employ the death penalty have lower murder rates than states that do."

Other points Sen. Clarke will stress during this afternoon's debate:

- There are many documented incidents of innocent people convicted of murder.
- Minorities are disproportionately sentenced to a capital punishment.
- There is no evidence to support a claim that the death penalty is a deterrent to police homicides.

- Homicide rates among prisoners and prison guards are higher in states that have capital punishment.
- Capital punishment is a more expensive option than life imprisonment due to the lengthy appeals process.

EDITORS NOTE: An audio sound file of Sen. Clarke commenting on his opposition to capital punishment can be accessed at: <http://www.senate.mi.gov/Audio%20Clips/01-021904> .
